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## **POLITICAL AND LINGUISTIC HISTORY OF IKA IGBO AND IKWERRE AS IGBO DIALECTS FOR PROMOTING NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper examines the political linguistic history of Ika Igbo and Ikwerre as Igbo dialects for promoting National security in the country. It discusses extensively the relationship and linguistic features of language family. The paper concluded by informing all Ibos to unite irrespective of the state or complexion. Encouraging and recommendations were made in order to re-unit all Ndigbo where ever they live in the world. The paper informed Ndi Igbo to make use of Igbo language in the training of their children and develop the language within the environment or the states they found themselves.*

**Keywords: Political, Linguistic, History, Dialects, Promoting, National Security.**

### **Introduction**

Classification of Ika Igbo and Ikwerre as Igbo dialects have being politicized and sometimes create controversy among the speakers in South- South/South East. Irrespective of the 'disagreement among the Igbos across the rivers in Delta, Bayesa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River, the history remains unchanged.

According to Edward (2008) . The study of language in Society is called Socio-linguistics. The real basis for much of Sociolinguistic is that the differences in language among members of a speech community or between different regions that speaks different varieties of the same language are often meaningful for society. Not everyone who speaks a given language speaks it in the same way. Actually, every individual uses language in their own unique way, This is evident from an analysis of writers, vocabulary for example, it is possible to prove the authorship of an anonymous work based on Statistical studies of word usage. In language learning an individual's particular way of speaking is called on **IDIOLECT**. Language variant spoken by

entire groups of people are referred to as dialects. Some linguists use the term LECT to describe any variant of language (family lect, , village of language etc).

This type of dialectical experiences and knowledge mad linguistics to develop an idea called **DIELECTOLOGY** which means the branch of sociolinguistics that studies the systematic variants of a language. The term dialect t was first coined in 1577 from the Latin dialects, way of speaking. Dialectal variation is present i in most language areas and often has important Social implications. The earliest recorded instance where dialectal information played a role in history appears in the Bible, in book of Judge 12:4-

Since after Nigeria and Biafara Civil War some Igbo towns were politically given to their neighbours who presently lives in South-south today. This error was done by then military government to reduce the strength and wealth of Igbos. The Military Heads of states took up pen and gun unilaterally drew the boundaries of states and decided where they like the capitals to be, mostly where their former orderlies or their friends hail from. These humiliations were done without any consultation or consent of the Traditional rulers, village heads and the indigenes. This was similar action taken by Lord Lugard in 1914, when he amalgamated Nigeria because he wanted excess tax from the Southern and Northern protectorates. Ukazu, (2009).

Everything changes, as Nigeria keep on changing her capital from Calabar to Lagos, and from Lagos to Abuja. The Igbos has all the rights to challenge all these states creation carried out Wrongly during the military regime, within the affected towns and villages without the consent of traditional rulers of the boundaries. This act made the Igbos who found themselves within the above mentioned areas to vehemently denying that they are not Igbos again because oil and gas were founded in some of these states. They are denying their ancestors, their rights in the spiritual world but still retain Igbo names. These controversies made them to disagree in some linguistic rules like, language continuum, phonological similarities, diagnossia similarities, and syntactical relationship Ukazu, (2008). Leonard (2009) defined dialect continuum as a range of dialects spoken across some geographical area that differ only slightly between neighbouring areas, but as one travels in any direction these differences accumulate such that speaker from opposite ends of the continuum are no longer (mutually intelligible) the lines we can draw between areas that differ with respect to any feature 'of language are called **Isogloses**. Ika Igbo and Ikwerre can be considered **abstandsprachan** (i.e. as stand-alone language) if the orthographies are not similar with Igbo language. However, they can be seen as dialects, of single language provided that a common standard language like Igbo through which communication is possible among the context dialects exists.

Finally, there are occasions when various nations of the same linguistic origins occupy the same territory and thus speak the same dialect but have split standard languages that located at different parts of the continuum sometimes causing doubt as to precisely which language the dialect in question is a member? In the case of Ika Igbo and Ikwerre, the present dialects they speak today are Igbo dialects, Igbo dialects are probably 20 in number. Irrespective of new

changes Ikwerre made in the orthography by adding and removing some letter from the dialect in order to differ from Igbo language. And this development does bring unity to the two regions and their ancestors. Based on this fact, Ika Igbos and Ikwerre belong to one language family which their ancestral language is Igboid.

### **Political and linguistic history of Ika Igbo as Igbo dialect**

Geographically, the Ika speaking people are found in the North-West of Delta State. They share borders linguistically with Edo speakers, in the North with the Ishan speakers in the East with the Anoma language speaker and in the South with the Ukwuani speakers.

According to Ohadike (1991), the present Ika people have not always been the only group known by the name Ika. Forde and Jones (1963) used the term Ika for wider community which includes the present Ika groups. Ika was used by Forde and Jones (1967), to repress parts of the four groups that make up the Western Igbo group (Aniocha, Oshimili, Ika an Ukwuani) found in present Delta state away from the shores of the river Niger. The remaining members of these groups that are on the shores of the River Niger are Asaba, Aboh and other were referred to as Riverine Ibo (Forde and Jones 1967), within this Ika group the present Jka community was classified as Northern Ika along with Aniocha, Oshimili while the kwuani groun was classified as Southern Ika. However, the origin and meaning of the name Ika and when only the present Ika community and their language began to be known and referred to by that name which they retain until today is not clear.

### **Classification of Ika Igbo in Delta and South East**

In Agbor there are two languages spoken Ozara and Ika. Ozara is Edoid while Ika is a mix of Bini and Igbo culture that is why they still have Igbo names like, Chukwuemeka, Okechukwu, Ngozi, Obanyerem, and Obinna etc.

Ika-Igbo belong to Niger-Congo language of the Igbo cluster spoken by 23,882 people as of the year (2000) in Delta state Nigeria Ika Igbo has separate standard forms of dialects central Igbo, and the dialect form. The dialect form gaining widest acceptance within the region. As earlier mentioned about their boundary in the east with Anioma and the South with Ukwuani, both of these areas are Igbo speaking people. The literal meaning of Anioma means good land in Igbo language and also acronym derived from the four original local governments Ohadike (1991).

### **See the arrangement of the acronym of Anioma**

1. Aniocha - A
2. Ndokwa - N
3. Ika - I

4. Oshimili - O

M and A are common denominators found in the four original Local Government Area. The coinage was made by the founding father Dennis Osadebe (1951). However, Anioma people who speak Ika/Igbo as dialect are many across South-South East. They are as follows:

In Anambra = Onistha, Ogbaru, Obosi, Ozobulu and Oraifite

Imo State = Oguta

River State = Ndoni and Ogba

**Areas of concentration of Ika Igbo**

Ebiegberi, Alagoa, Anoize & Ezinunwa (1988) is one of the four major Igbo dialects spoken by the Anioma people (predominantly based in Aniocha, Ndokwa, Ika, and Oshimil areas).

Semanically, Enuani or Anioma is spoken closer to Igbo language and it is Igbo diacllet The area of concentration of these people mostly comprises Ibusa, Asaba, Ogwashi-Uku, Ila Issele-uku, Issele-azagba, Okpanaru, Ubulu-Uku, Ubulu Okite Ubulu, Uno, Oko communites Ejeme, Aniogo Onitsha Ugbo. Ugbolu, Idumuje-ano, Idumuje-Ugboko. Onicha Uka, Onich Olona and the rest of them.

These dialects spoken in all of these areas are homogenous in accent and mutually intelligible it is also remarkable that these dialects have naturally standardized orthographies which have similarities with Igbo language in terms of semantics and syntactic. Igbo language is intelligible to all the above mentioned towns in Delta state. But not all Anioma are Igbos.

Migration from	Settle Area
Nkwerre (Imo)	Ikwerre
Nteje	Asaba (joined by Igala)
Nri	Ute-okpu
Nri	Obomkpa
Nri and Benin	Igala and Obior
Nri and Benin	Ogwuashi-Uku
(founded by Igbo man from Anambra)	Ehulu
Okehi close to Owerri	Ndoni

Nri	Akwukwu
Oba (Anambra)	Ogbeowe
Nri	Illah.
Isu (Imo State)	Ibusa (Igbo-Uzo Isu)

### Political and linguistic history of Ikwerre as Igbo dialect

Ikwerre dialect is located in the present Rivers State of Nigeria. Ikwerre is also spelt as Ikwere, is a dialect of Igbo language that is spoken primarily by the Ikwerre people. According to 2006 population census report the number of Ikwerre speakers are estimated at 300,000 by taking into consideration the population of the four Ikwerre Local Government Areas. Port-Harcourt, Emohua, Obiakpor and Ikwerre. Ebiegber Anozie, Nwanna & Zewunwa (1988).

Classification of Ikwerre as Igbo dialect remains a subject of controversy among a minority in the Ikwerre community; although old and recent publications classify it as an Igboid language based on lexicostatistical analysis. Kay (2000) originally asserted that Ikwerre, Ekpeye, Ogba, Etche and Igbo language belong to the same language cluster or related languages.

In his own contribution Roger (2009) concluded that the Igbo, Ikwere, Ogba and other sister language are from one "language cluster" and that they are somewhat intelligible among them. He further said that if this was an original Ikwere language separates from Igbo then that has been lost and replaced by a language that is sister to Igbo with no evidence of it ever existing.

Ikwerre distinguishes vowels by quality (frontedness and height) the presence or absence of nasalization and the presence or absence of advanced tongue root. (Roger Blench).

		Front	Back
High	+ATR	Ii	Uu
	- ATR	Ii	
	+ATR	ee	oo
Mid	-ATR	EE	UU
Low	-ATR		

**See examples of ikwerre dialects**

Apani, Elele, Omerelu, Egbendna, Aluu, Igwuruta, Ibaa, Isiokpo, Omagwana, Ubim, Ipo Omudioga, Obio, Rumuije as earlier saw classification as Niger Congo Atlantic - Congo. Volta-Congo Benue Congo Igboid, Igbo language. Ikwerre is the Southern end of Igbo while Izzi, Ezza, Ikwo and Mgbo are the Northeastern end of Igbo land. Another ethnic group in Nigeria that can lay claim as the dialect of Igbo language is Ekpeye (Akpaohia) Ekpeye people settle in Igbo land in Ahoda (Ahuda) and Ogba Egbema areas of River and Bayelsa States. The Ekpeye speak their own Igboid language and they are linguistically and cultural located in Igbo land.

Olson (1996) stated that the Ekpeye have long lived in the land bounded by River Orashi in the West and River Sombreiro in the East starting out at the Northern end from about 300 BC Archaeological work showed a steady and very consistent South ward movement of the Igbo people resulting in about Ad 1000.

Dialects - Ako, Upata, Ubye, Igbuduya, relate to Igbo (160}

<b>Ikwerre (dialects)</b>	<b>Igbo(language)</b>	<b>English (language)</b>
Nwenenda	Nwannenaya	Fathers' sibling
Aleruchi	Elewechi, Anenechi	Lets keep our eyes in God
Bekwele	Ibekwele	To agree
Igwe Ochambram	Igwe Ochambarama	
Oroma	Uloma	Good house
Ovunda	Obinna	Father Heart
Wenenda	Nwannenne	Mother's sibling
Weneka	Nwanneka	Sibling is supreme
Hachikam	Nkechikara	What God says
Homa	Iheoma Ifeoma	Good thing
Wali	Nwala	The owner of land
Rumola	Umuola	Children of Olu
Rumumasi	Umumasi	Children of Masi

Yobigbo	Obigbo	Heart of Igbo
Wachukwu	Nwachukwu	Godson
Chisaro	Chizaram	God answered
Chiwendu	Chinwendu	me
Ekpeye	Ekpohia	God owns life
Ahoadá	Ahuda	

**Historically:** Many Archacologists have worked round the clock to find out that they originated from the same ancestors. What written history lays out Opobo and Bonny (Umu-Ubani) proved to the true. In fact nothing would take away the fact that Opobo particularly, was founded by an Igbo man from Nkwerre present Imo State. The Opobo people do not only have their dialect as several Igbo clans do, most of the people speak and bear Igbo names up till date. Some of them speak and recognise Igbo language or dialects as well as the Ubani. Ibani. or Ibgani dialect which was strong but retained an unmistakable Igbo language touch. Fode & Jones (1963).

### Conclusion

In the findings of political and linguistic history of Ika Igbo and Ikwerre as Igbo dialects, it was discovered that due to the nature of Igbo systemn of scattered living method, the Nigeria civil war and the location of oil and gas in Nigeria. Ika Igbo and Ikwerre developed the idea of disintegrate from their ancestral Igbo land and language. More so. it is a well know fact that all minority groups were afraid of domination by the majority groups in all the regions of Nigeria: but if all Igbo living within the south cast and South-south will units as one that will move mountain in Nigeria politics. It is pertinent to mention here that there is nothing like proper Igbo or Riverain Igbo. Igbo man is Igbo man irrespective Of his state or complexion.

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